New Pension Scheme

2152. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a fresh Pension Scheme for its new entrants;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the new pension scheme would also be applicable to all persons including self-employed professionals and others in the organized and unorganized sector including those governed by the Employees Provident Fund Act, 1952; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and whether the new pension scheme would be more beneficial to the categories specified in part (c) above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. With effect from January 01, 2004, a defined contribution pension scheme is mandatory for new entrants to Central Government service, except to Armed Forces, in the first stage, replacing the existing system of defined benefit pension.

(c) and (d) The new system will also be available on a voluntary basis, to all persons including self-employed professionals and others in the unorganized sector. However, mandatory programmes under the Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) and other special provident funds would continue to operate as per the existing system under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and other special Acts governing these funds. Individuals under these programmes could voluntarily choose to additionally participate in this scheme.

Evasion of tax by co-operative societies

2153. SHRI R.K. ANAND. Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the co-operative societies do not file returns of income and are evading payment of income tax to the Government in crores of rupees;

(b) whether the Income Tax Department has failed to collect hundreds of crores of rupees from the co-operative societies registered in different parts of the country; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to ensure that the co-operative societies file their income tax returns and realise their dues from the co-operative societies?